

Shasta-Trinity CCC Backcountry Trails Crew
July 2013 Overview
Supervisor: Julian Wischniewski

Overview:

With the many challenges that July brought, it came and went with the spectacular splendor of any old mountain thunderstorm— the change in ambience, the calm, the first flashes, thunderous calamity, a quick shower and cool-off, and a receding front revealing clear skies. The Shasta-T Crew's month went something like this: a perfectly healthy transformation that we were lucky to have been blessed with.

The work is a good example of this analogy. After hiking over the ridge separating Canyon Creek from Stuart Fork to our new camp at the Alpine Lake/Stuart Fork junction, the crew had plans to unleash their thunderous work ethic— if not for revenge—upon the Bear Creek trail. It's a steep, rocky trail that gains around 3,000ft over about 3 miles from camp to ridge top. The brush was thicker than Mark Moore's beard. We spent time brushing a wide and respectable corridor where, with the eye of Holly and Matt Carson, a major drainage and trail structure concerns we identified. Thunder and flashes ensued; rocks were being gathered for the much needed face lift of the lower portion of this trail. The challenge was met head on with new discoveries of technique, self-motivated, patience and strength entering the minds of these budding trail workers. This rock-connection, this intimacy, was becoming real. Rocks taught us a lot about how to work well together, how to move and connect with our bodies, how the iron in the rock and in our blood is the same, has always been the same... We learned much about the actual construction, too— a continuous rediscovery. There is always something to learn on each rock project, as all rocks are teachers and we, we're bags of flesh, are their humble, humble students. As the storm built, engaged, and receded, it's difficult to draw a distinction between the work and the crew as analogous to this weather phenomenon. True nature is true nature.

That was Bear Creek. We also worked on Alpine Lake Trail, clearing it of downed trees from winds, snow, or rotting tree-flesh. Stuart Fork Trail, from origin to Morris Meadows was also maintained, but under unique circumstances. The crew took charge of two separate groups of young people from the Ascend Wilderness Experience (July 18-19, 25-26), teaching and mentoring them as drains were cleared from debris and silt. It was great to see how much was retained over the reason as some of the knowledge was passed down in tiny increments to volunteer from the community of Weaverville.

Our camp was the best yet—complete with rip-rap stone-flooring in the shower and a massive toolshed and pack area. Thanks to the crew for the hard work setting up a functional and cozy camp. We took it down the 31st, though-remembering impermanent! And hiked up to our August camp located at the far end of Morris Meadows— tucked in the spacious forest where Douglas and White Fir, Cedar and Maple have oceans of ferns and other green leafy plants between them; one of the better examples of a healthy forest.

We feel more at home each day, as the crew discovers their role in the community and the real impact they have on it— and it on them. I am very proud to see real effort to solve issues as they arise. This

experience is truly transformative; the crew dynamics notwithstanding. As we connect and dedicate ourselves to this place, we come to see how intimately interrelated we are with it. Our warmth comes from the sun, the wood we gather and chop, and the calories graciously given to us by pack strong, the KP, the cook. We clean ourselves in water that melds with the rock we move, the ashes that float on it along with our sweat or blood—this cycle view becomes the norm, cause and effect is the law of this land. And those inklings of gratitude to this life, especially in non-verbal form of a glance, a smile or sneer, utter laughter around a fire late Friday night that resonates and echoes among our hall of trees and rock—these are the treasures of life in the backcountry.

Thanks to the visitors who came and stayed with us. Connor's friend Darah and Quinn (rocky Mountain Youth Corps Alumni) helped set up some of our camp and we were eager to use this geographically diversified assembly as sources for their round-trip destinations. They were familiar with camp life and were thus blown away by how organized a Backcountry Camp can be. True compliment! Thanks for visiting and Godspeed!

During our raging Halloween Party, Matt Carson (Packer, USFS) in pirate form, hung out during the festivities. Thanks for the words, the work you lined us out with and for helping out Holly as she recovered from her injury. Bridgette Payne (Yosemite '03) visited the crew and slammed in some rock, brought us mail on the grade, and shared an eye-opening class on empathic/ non-violent communication. Thanks for joining us for a blink of an eye—the effects were tremendous. Enjoy Tassajara Zen Mountain Center and your season in Yosemite!

We look forward to August, the 99 switchbacks up the Caribou Scramble, the log out runs, and more rock work. May we always explore, grow, and know ourselves through this special work in this special place.

Curriculum/evening programs:

- Nonviolent Communication- Bridgette Payne
- Slang of social and abroad with mad libs- Jason Antinora
- Mental toughness discussion- Emma Lundberg
- The last season- continuous reading
- Biographies: Jason Antinora, Stella Blashock, Emma Lundberg, Stefan Tsourovakas, Devin Stacy, Camron Abbott

Production:

Maintenance: 12 miles

Multi-Tier wall: 36 sq. ft.

Waterbars: 18

Causeway: 12 LY

Rip Rap: 4 LY

Rehab: 120 LY

Corpsmember Thoughts:

Ashley Weil-

July proved to be a pivotal month for me out here in the Trinity Alps. Before we came out to the backcountry, we were warned that July is typically the hardest month for crewmembers because the beginning and the end are both hard to see. To be honest, I brushed the warnings off, assuming the blues wouldn't bring me down, but they'll catch up to anyone who's not careful.

The month started off particularly rocky when I had to leave the backcountry and fly back to Florida for a week to help my family overcome a death in the family. Literally, the last thing I would ever expect to happen. My hike out lined up with the crew's second camp love out here in the Alps. I knew I had to go home, but part of me felt like I was letting my crew down by not helping with the move. The crew was amazingly supportive and loving, ensuring me that they knew what I had to do and sending me on my way with well wishes for my family. The week at home was nice at times and overwhelming at others. IT was so good to see my family, eat ice cream and sit on something other than the ground. But the whole time, I knew where I needed to get back to, and I never once doubted that I would return to the Alps and the additional family I had come to love. I spent my last day stocking up on supplies (e.g. candy, matching skull bandanas, cookies, beef jerky, cliff bars, etc.) that my mom would send the crew weekly. I also spent a good portion of the morning calling crewmembers families asking for resupplies. I will admit that there were times where I felt out of place back in civilization, including a panic attack in Sacramento Airport, but at the same time, I was slightly disappointed in how quickly I had fallen back in to my former life. It just reminded me that my time in the backcountry was not over yet.

I returned to the Alps to a brand new beautiful camp on the 4th of July, which meant the crew would have a 3-day weekend. I patiently waited at camp for the crew to return from work, and as I heard voices approaching, a broad smile crept across my face. I quickly joined up with Julian, Nicole, Stefan and Christian for the weekend 10-mile on my first day back. I was definitely tiresome, but it felt good to be back in action. We spent the night in Morris Meadows with the plan to cross country up to Smith and Morris Lakes. The next afternoon we set off. Immediately encountering a grueling two-hour bushwhacks through giant manzanita bushes. I couldn't help but crack up as I would fall or get smacked in the face, pieces of my foam sleeping pad getting ripped off, leaving a blue trail behind me. At one point, I fell back on to my pack, feet hailing in the air, completely unsure of how to get myself upright. After a 7-hour hike, complete with minor doubts of, "What the heck am I doing living in the woods for 6 months?" We made it. Smith was breathtaking and it all started to come back to me. We spent Saturday adventuring to Morris and playing an intense tournament of rummy. Sunday we embarked on our return early, as we had to cross a ridge, drop down to Alpine Lake, then take Bear Creek Trail back to camp. I really couldn't have asked for a more perfect weekend to welcome me back.

Getting into the swing of daily life wasn't hard, except the crew had started waking up significantly earlier and I was facing the dilemma of, "Twenty more minutes of sleep or cleaning the lunch table?" Sleep always won out.. But my heart and mind weren't always there. I missed my family and New Orleans (the city most recently lived in) more than I did before. I felt stressed and frustrated. I'd try to

fight it but had a hard time pulling myself together. Not to mention, a majority of the crew were feeling the July blues too.

On the weekend of July 19th, I decided to go on a big adventure with Ian, Camron A. and Jason. I was on the slower side of hiking and, out of intimidation, usually stayed away from big weekends. We left Friday after work with the intent of hiking the seven miles to the Deer Creek/Tri forest junction. Never finding the junction, we finally called it a night. Eighteen mile day, including work; longest day yet! The next morning, we realized we had passed the junction so we backtracked and started up Fri Forest. The plan was to make it to the ridge, cross country to Tri Forest Peak and drop down to Horseshoe and Ward Lakes. We took our time, enjoying the insane scenery and stopping for candy breaks as we pleased, by late afternoon. We were on the ridge but after reevaluating our water and time situation, we decided to drop down to Salmon Lake. While on the ridge, we were able to look out onto Sawroom Ridge, which we all concluded was the most “metal” thing we’d ever seen. Salmon Lake was a beautiful scene, although the lake itself was packed with algae. We woke up super early to get back to the ridge for sunrise to cook breakfast. We were a little light but, still the view was incredible. We then hiked to the other side of the ridge to an unnamed peak where we turned the Nudie Peaks committee, each taking our turn to bask in the glorious view. Everywhere I could look there were mountains for as far as I could see and it was crazy to think about how few people were in all that land and how it had come to be my home. It was one of the most awe-inspiring experiences of my life. The weekend revitalized me and my excitement for the rest of the season.

In addition, I was able to get a better grasp on rock work during July. I successfully installed a 9-rock waterbar independently and then added a three-check-step causeway alongside Camron A. The confidence I gained from working individually made me feel like a stronger addition to the crew and helped strengthen my new outlook on the season from this point on. I plan to stop worrying about the little things, instead savoring each and every moment, view, and conversation for the rest of the season.